



A.F.T.A. AUTUMN NEWSLETTER.



The shorter days have suddenly arrived and the allotments are slowly winding down and being put to bed for the winter. We have had a fabulous growing season this summer though and it certainly renews enthusiasm for next year; I am already beginning to think about what new crop I can try out. It certainly will not be celeriac, I've tried twice now and can't grow it for toffee. Thinking of next year and planning.....

KING'S SEED ORDER

Will is intending to send in a seed order to King's Seeds this month. As you know, the seed ordering scheme benefits the Association as a whole and also benefits you, as the cost of these quality seeds is very reasonable indeed compared to other leading seed companies. He still has some catalogues available. Orders can be given to him directly or you can post your order in Angela's post box; this is located on the back of her small Wendy house and facing the path between her allotment and Bill's. Payment is required with orders and seeds will be delivered this year to Keith and Tracy.

DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS OCTOBER 11th.



ASSOCIATION NEWS.

FRODSHAM TRANSITION INITIATIVE DAY.

The Allotment Association was once again invited to have a table at Frodsham Transition Initiative's event at Frodsham Community Centre on Sept 7th and we are always grateful for this free opportunity to promote ourselves. We duly set up our display of prime allotment fruit and veg with before and after photographs of the site and of our recent open day. People are always interested in the allotments and impressed with the veg; our aim of course is to encourage more people to come along and get a plot. The good news on this front is that we do seem to have had a steady flow of new people particularly since the summer.

The other benefit from attending this event is the opportunity we get to find out about, and network with, other local groups and projects. The Community Orchard project has plans to extend its' activities to an area close to Hob Hey Wood. They always welcome new helpers when planting the trees so if you are interested in volunteering contact the project via the initiative email frodshamtransition@gmail.com

The Incredible Edible Movement is also coming to Frodsham and there are plans to start next year with the planting of fruit and herbs near the new surgery and possibly in other planters around the town centre. They can be contacted through the above email and for info about the movement as a whole go to www.incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk.

MAINTENANCE, COMPOST & RUBBISH.

Firstly, Will would like to thank the people who turned up for the maintenance day on Saturday 21st September. They worked very hard on weeding the car park flower border, mowing and strimming and generally clearing up the site.

Secondly, you may have noticed that a lot of work has been put into moving material that has been dumped at the corner of the horse field and the 'd row' path. It is proposed that we build a series of large communal compost bins in this area along the bottom of the horse field. This will of course necessitate large scale removal of all the material that has already been deposited there. So, if you do have organic matter that you need to dump please take it down to the far end and avoid the cleared area and the adjacent bank. Many thanks in advance.

SOCIAL CALENDER

Several of us enjoyed a lovely association barbecue at the end of August. There was beautiful weather, very tasty food and good company so thanks to Kim for organising it.

Sometime in November we hope to have an astronomy evening, on site, with Andy Davies.
This will be dependent on the weather, details nearer the day.

A.G.M. SAT NOV 16th

It seems amazing but in November it will be a year since the setting up of the Allotment Association and our first A.G.M. It is proposed that our second one will take place on Saturday 16th November and will be in the same place as last year, the Scout Hut to the rear of Devonshire Bakery. Details of the day will be confirmed later so keep an eye on the notice board and your emails. It will be an opportunity for everyone to get an update of what has happened in the past year, proposals for the coming year and raise issues that they want clarification about. You may even wish to become a committee member; if so, please get in touch with the present committee to get up on how to go about it.

Hopefully as many of you as possible will be able to come. It's a great opportunity to meet people that you may not have had the opportunity to talk to, especially those new on the allotments, and to share the triumphs and tribulations of the past summer.

And now for something completely different..... I am always interested in any pieces from you that you want to include in the newsletter and I am pleased to say that Stuart has taken me up on this and has written the following really interesting article on the history of the fields where the allotments are located.

THE TOWNFIELDS.

The Association's adopted name has a very historical significance as well as the obvious geographical meaning.

The "Townfield" Lane marks the area in medieval times, going way back to the pre Black Death era c 1347 (when almost half the country's population was wiped out) where the fields were literally the Townfields of Frodsham where the local Serfs and Peasants toiled to eke out a living. In fact the existence of the Townfields of Frotesham(Frodsham) is recorded in the Domesday Book(1086 A.D.)

It was the usual practice for Serfs, who occupied a plot of land, to be required to work for the [Lord of the Manor](#) who owned that land, and in return were entitled to protection, justice and the right to exploit certain fields within the [manor](#) to maintain their own subsistence. Serfs were often required not only to work on the lord's fields, but also his

mines, forests and roads. The [manor](#) formed the basic unit of feudal society and the [Lord of the Manor](#) and his serfs were bound legally, economically, and socially. Serfs formed the lowest [social class](#) of feudal society. However in Frodsham there was a unique situation where the Peasants rented the land (nothing changes!!) instead of the common feudal practice.



The usual size of a “Plot” was eight Statute Acres which was the size considered to be economically viable bearing in mind one third remained fallow each year. During the Middle Ages, an acre was the amount of land that could be [ploughed](#) in one day with a [yoke](#) of [oxen](#) and measured by one chain in width (22 yards), and one furlong, or 10 chains in length (220 yards), yielding 4840 square yards. Life of course was very different then and crop failure could have devastating results with starvation or the inability to rent the land through insufficient currency a real possibility.

So the next time you are at your allotment, resting on your spade and gazing across the Weaver Valley, give some thought to William Balle, John de Qwertby*, John Emnesone or Richard Webbe. You may be standing on the very ground that one of them was working those hundreds of years ago.

*On first seeing the name Qwertby I immediately wondered if, through the passages of time, the name became Whitby. There are several families with the name Whitby in Frodsham today.

Stuart Bennison.

MANY THANKS TO STUART.



WELL, THAT’S IT UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, HAPPY HARVESTS, SUSAN.